



## CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY

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## ***Seminar Offers Vital Information as State Moves Forward With Plan for High-Speed Train:*** **Japanese Bullet Train Returns to San Francisco**

**San Francisco, CA** – As Californians show increasing interest and support for high-speed trains, heading towards a November ballot measure, a seminar was held today in San Francisco discussing “Shinkansen,” Japan’s High-Speed Train System. Judge Quentin Kopp offered opening remarks to a distinguished crowd of public officials, policy makers and citizens about the economic and environmental benefits of high-speed trains.

“The sincerity and commitment expressed here today, reflects the strong bonds between our countries. This is a critical year for high-speed rail in California, and our efforts are enhanced by showcasing the benefits of a technology and system resulting in even greater benefits for residents and the environment”, stated Judge Quentin Kopp.

Japan’s 40-year history of high-speed train’s history was shared, including its benefits to the Japanese economy and its positive impacts upon the environment. Presentations were made available by experts such as Assistant Vice Minister for International Affairs Keiji Fukumoto of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in Japan and Adviser to the President Toshiji Takatsu of Japan Railway Construction, Transport and Technology Agency.

“We were eager to bring Shinkansen and its benefits to the American public,” said Fukumoto. “For more than four decades, our country has been able to enjoy and witness firsthand the benefits of high-speed trains. It is our greatest hope the information presented today will serve as a model for California as it moves forward in making its vision of high-speed trains a reality.”

Japan was the first country to build dedicated railway lines for high-speed travel with the Shinkansen opening in 1964. It was an immediate success, reaching the 100 million-passenger mark in less than three years and 1 billion passengers in 1976. Today’s trains now operate at speeds of more than 185 miles per hour.

As part of the California’s efforts to offer an alternative to cars and air travel for today’s commuters, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce the state’s dependence on foreign oil, the California High-Speed Rail Authority has been working to plan and design a high-speed train system since 1996. With the certification of the Statewide Final program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in November 2005, the Authority has begun implementation of the 700+-mile high-speed train system that will serve Sacramento, the San

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Francisco Bay Area, the Central Valley, Los Angeles, the Inland Empire, Orange County and San Diego. High-speed trains will be capable of speeds of over 200 miles per hour with an expected trip time from San Francisco to Los Angeles taking just over 2 hours and 30 minutes. The system is forecast to potentially carry over 94 million passengers per year by 2030.

The 2007-08 enacted State budget provides \$20.7 million to continue project implementation, including the preparation of a project financial plan, project management activities, identification of critical rights-of-way acquisitions and the continuation of detailed project design and related environmental studies.

However, voters must still authorize state bond funding for the project in 2008. A \$9.95 billion dollar bond measure is on the November 2008 ballot with \$9 billion for implementing high-speed rail and \$950 million for improvements to other rail services that connect to the high-speed rail service. These funds would be complemented by federal funds and private sector investments. This bond measure requires a simple majority vote for approval.

“Transportation and the environment are at the forefront of policymaking and legislative discussions,” said Mehdi Morshed, Executive Director of the California High-Speed Rail Authority. “A significant way to improve both traffic congestion and our air quality is by bringing high-speed rail to California. This seminar shared how high-speed trains have benefited Japan for decades and the potential they have to better serve the daily needs of California’s commuters.”

For more information about the California High-Speed Rail Authority, please visit [www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov).

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